

# A Grand Opening for New Senior Center

By PAULA MAXWELL

Warm weather served to enhance the festivities last Friday as an estimated crowd of over 300 people attended ribbon cutting, dedication and grand opening of the new Duxbury senior center on Mayflower Street.

Dignitaries including Sen. Robert Hedlund, Emmett Schmarsow from the executive office of elder affairs, Town Manager Rocco Longo, and selectmen, joined with members of the community and others to celebrate the culmination of many years of planning, fundraising and dedication to reach completion of the new center.

For the Council on Aging it was a long jump from the base-

ment of the Alden School and a few bounces in between to the old town hall. But on Friday, those in attendance agreed the new 13,000 square foot modern center was worth waiting for.

Following the event, Town Manager Rocco Longo said he was overwhelmed by the turnout for a "first class facility which will offer a wide range of events and programs for seniors and others in the community."

In welcoming remarks Friday he noted, "This senior center will serve as a model for other towns." He said the effort reflected the dedication of committed professionals and volunteers which "can only be

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matched; it cannot be surpassed."

In thanking the many who contributed he also observed the contributions of the late Jack Canty "a volunteer and consummate professional," Neil Murphy the building contractor, Architect John Catlin, Bob Clarke, Dennis Nolan and Bill Campbell, volunteer project engineer.

As the "great room" swelled to overflow capacity, Longo observed the sense of community reflected in the center and noted that the room would serve the town well and be gathering spot for many wonderful events to come.

Selectman Margaret Kearney said, "This is a wonderful day for our town."

She reviewed the road to completion and the town meeting votes to fund site analysis, design and finally the \$2 million for construction to finally launch the project. In return she said the town, as a whole will benefit from the center and its programs.

She noted that the commitment to stay within budget was realized and that, thanks to the Friends of the Council on Aging committee, fundraising covered the furnishings.

Keynote speaker Emmett Schmarsow of the state's elder services office noted that his office works with 348 Council on Aging groups in the Commonwealth. "Age is a gift. What elders value most is their independence but you can't be independent by yourself... This is more than a senior center, it is an opportunity center where there will be things you want to do and do with friends."

He said that society is changing and that the average

person now retires at age 61.4 years and lives at least 20 years after. Quality of life for senior population is becoming more and more in focus. He quoted Eleanor Roosevelt in saying "We become old when we cease to make a contribution." For all you ageless people who made a contribution here- thank you and congratulations."

Among those recognized from the podium was project manager Bill Campbell who was presented with an inscribed plaque by Selectman Kearney who noted that his volunteer efforts as project manager and clerk of the works saved the town \$60,000.

The plaque reads: "The Duxbury community acknowledges with gratitude the vision, talent and dedication of R. William Campbell in guiding the Duxbury Senior Center through the planning, design and construction."

Campbell spoke of the long labor and research which led to the new facility a more than 10 year effort which could not have been accomplished without the dedication of many in the community. "The town has been given a facility that for decades will serve the needs of Duxbury residents. Let's roll."

The two story 12,650 square foot building includes many features including a multi purpose or great room with movable partitions, a fitness room, full service kitchen which will serve daily lunches and meals on wheels, craft rooms, counseling areas, outdoor recreation space a terrace, computer room, reading lounge and assorted classroom space.

Friends of the Council on Aging President Jack Hamilton and Treasurer Tom Chapman were recognized with plaques during the ceremonies for

fundraising to cover the costs of the interior furnishings.

Besides the numerous fundraising activities including golf tournaments and an art auction the Friends were able to secure gift donations in the community for dedication of specific rooms and features at the center in addition the interior design services were donated by the Horton family of Horton & Horton Interiors.

Hamilton said the efforts cover everything from card tables to computer stations, chandeliers and table lamps, china, silver and glassware. There is also a baby grand piano donated by a local citizen.

Perhaps no one was as excited as Council on Aging Director Kristin Andrews who, along with assistant director Donna Pizura, will relocate

from a cluttered office in the old town hall to a spacious office in the new facility.

"This is wonderful day and this beautiful functioning building represents the efforts of many hardworking volunteers. It will enable us to improve the quality of life for many people in this community."

Andrews said there will be significant additional outreach activities for the estimated 2,600 seniors living in the community.

There will be expanded medical and health services including foot care once or twice a month, blood pressure program, insurance and legal assistance, tax preparation services, fuel assistance.

Andrews said she looks forward to organized team sports activities, expanded trip oppor-

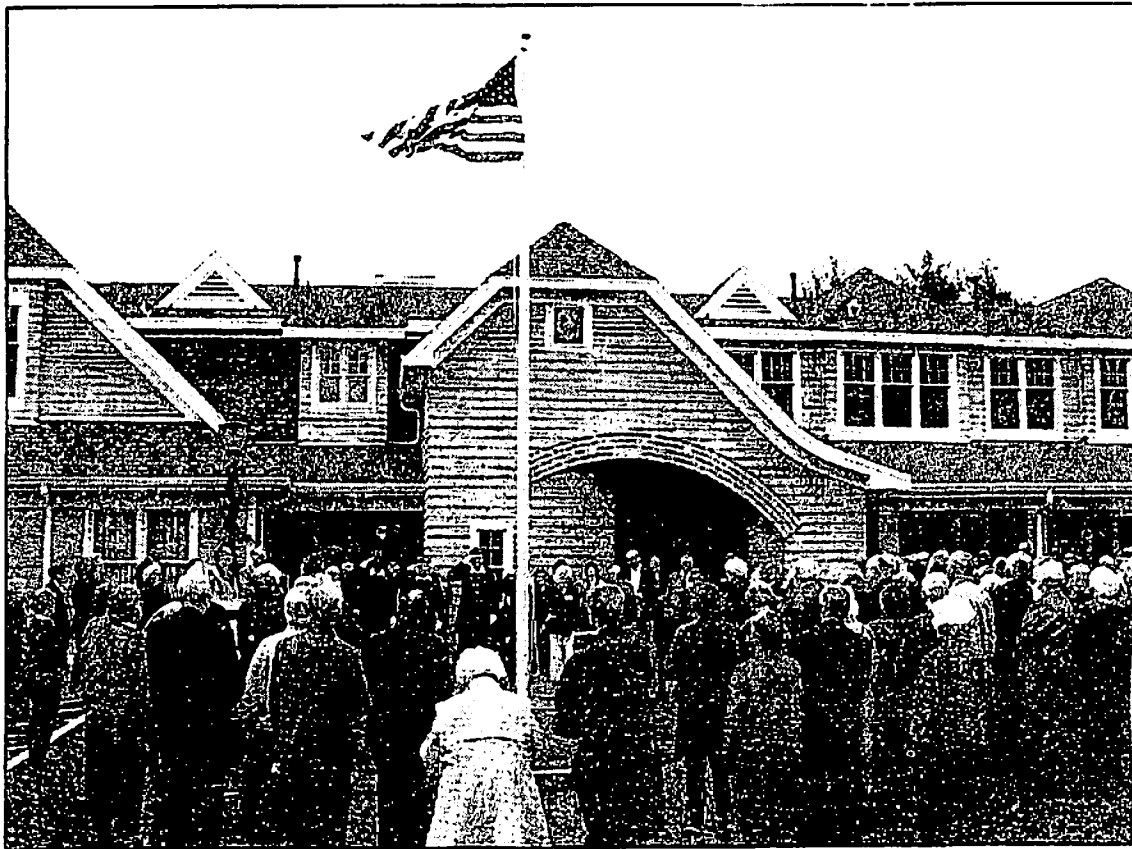
tunities, more craft opportunities including caning, quilting, book clubs language classes, eight computer stations and computer instruction.

Council on Aging President Henry Milliken served as master of ceremonies for the occasion and noted that the center will provide more stimulation for seniors.

"It's not going to happen the first day but we know there will be a lot of people who were not using the senior center who will do so now.

"I think it's going to be much nicer for a senior living in Duxbury. It's going to be a fun place, a happening place with all sorts of interesting things going on."

The senior center is expected to be fully occupied in early 2002.



**A COMMUNITY CELEBRATION**— Over 300 people turned out for dedication and grand opening festivities at the new Duxbury Senior Center Nov. 30. Shown: flag raising ceremonies were followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and singing of the national anthem.

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